

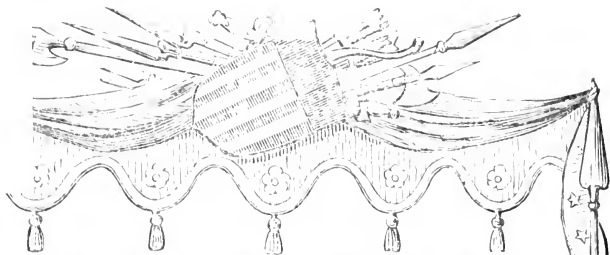
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No. 128 WASHINGTON, CORNER OF WATER STREET, BOSTON.

MY HUSBAND'S MIRROR.

A Domestic Comedietta,

IN ONE ACT.

WRITTEN BY

W. W. CLAPP, JR., ESQ.,

EDITOR OF THE BOSTON SATURDAY EVENING GAZETTE;

AUTHOR OF

"A RECORD OF THE BOSTON STAGE;" A DRAMATIC TRIPLE, ENTITLED
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WITH

ORIGINAL CASTS, COSTUMES, AND THE WHOLE OF THE STAGE
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CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	<i>Boston Museum, Dec. 22, 1855.</i>	<i>Boston Theatre, Jan. 5, 1857.</i>	
FRED DELMAINE,	Mr. William Warren	Mr. John Gilbert
MR. RICKER,	" Wilson	" G. Johnson
FOUNDERS,	" H. L. Bascom	" N. T. Davenport
MRS. DELMAINE,	Mrs. Skerrett	Miss Lizzie Emmoree
MARGARET,	Miss Fredericks	Miss Ida Vernon
CHILDREN,	{ Miss M. Thomson }	{ Miss Jones }
	{ " C. Thomson }	{ " Watson }

SCENE. — BOSTON.

TIME. — PRESENT DAY.

COSTUMES. — MODERN.

NOTE. — This COMEDIETTA was originally produced at the Boston Museum, and was subsequently retouched and adapted for the Boston Theatre.

MY HUSBAND'S MIRROR.

ACT I.

SCENE I. — *Breakfast Room in the House of DELMAINE.* C. D. open, backed by chamber. D. F. R. H., practical, to open on stage, backed with closet backing with several coats hung up in the closet. Set door, 2 E. L. H.; set door, 1 E. R. H.; window, L. flat; round table covered, on R. H., on it pens, ink, paper, hand bell, envelopes, books, and written letter; two chairs on R. H.; two chairs R. and L. of C. D.; sofa on L. C. 2 G; table on L. H., covered with white cloth, and set for breakfast for two persons; newspaper on L. table, (written;) set fire place, 2 E. R. H., and fire burning; two chairs R. and L. of table L. H.; reticule, (with two written letters in it,) hanging on chair R. of L. table; carpet, hearth rug, and fire stand on by fireplace, R. H.

Enter FRED DELMAINE, door 2 E. L. H.

Fred. If there is an unhappier man than myself in this world, I should like to see him. I should like to take his hand and condole with him. Misery likes company, they say; and as I feel now, it would be a luxury, yes, an actual treat, to see some individual a shade or two more miserable than myself. And this comes of getting married — of deserting those bachelors with whom, until thirty-five years of age, I lived, and had an existence. I was happy then, free as the air, and contented — till I saw the present Mrs. Delmaine. It was an unfortunate day for me, when I came across this village beauty. She was so plump, so jovial, and so kind of social, that I popped the question. She accepted, and we were married before I really knew what I was about. It makes my head snap to think of it. The first year of wedded life that cherub Peace sat smiling on our hearth — I should say stove, for we occupied a single room in a highly respectable boarding house in Bowdoin Street, and the room was heated by an air-tight. These were happy days. We didn't have room enough to swing a cat round; but as we didn't have any leisure for that recreation, we didn't care. Mrs. Delmaine was the very *beau ideal* of a wife. I never found a button off a shirt; but now, hang me, I am a sort of perambulating pincushion. I've got my dickey pinned on now, and my sleeves are pinned too. Every thing in the house is going to rack and ruin. Children are not cared for — servants do as they please. Belzebub's back kitchen must be a paradise to such a place as this. I wonder why Mrs. Delmaine does not make her appearance. (*Things bell violently several times.*) Margaret! Margaret!

Enter MARGARET, door R. H. 1 E., yawning and rubbing her eyes — dressed very sluttishly.

Mar. Dear me — I believe I heard a bell. (*Yawns.*) What a situation I've got, to be sure! (*Yawns.*) O, you rang, did you, Mr. Delmaine?

Fred. I think I did. Where's your mistress?

Mar. She's dressing, sir. — (*Aside.*) Dear me, I do wish I knew how fashionable ladies get along with such a little sleep — she didn't come home till near daybreak.

Fred. Don't stand there mumbling. Go tell Mrs. Delmaine that breakfast is waiting, and then just rub the slumber out of your eyes with the Cochlitate — if it ain't froze up.

Mar. (*Going.*) Slumber! I don't know what that word means since I've lived here. What with mistress's late hours, and master's early hours, and the children at all sorts of hours, day and night, I haven't time for a dream. (*Yawns.*) (*Exit, door 1 E. R. H.*)

Fred. That's the way it goes. When I bought this house and furnished it, I thought nothing was wanting to complete our happiness. Friends called and congratulated us; we gave little parties, and I was proud of the attention paid Mrs. Delmaine; but, hang me, it spoiled her. So soon as she thought she was *somebody*, she imagined I was *nobody*. It's a way *some* wives have of looking at their husbands; but I'm not going to be turned into a mere money-making machine to supply the extravagant wants of any female that walks. Rather than do it, I'll get a divorce — a divorce — a divorce.

Enter MRS. DELMAINE, door R. H. 1 E.

Mrs. Del. What's that you are talking about, Frederick — what's that you say?

Fred. Madam, I was thinking aloud; and as you overheard a portion of my cogitations, you might as well know the rest. I am tired of talking to *you*, Mrs. Delmaine, and, what's more, I am tired of receiving every July and January a perfect avalanche of bills, when I supply you liberally with sufficient for every want.

Mrs. Del. Go on, sir, go on — I suppose I'm to be favored with one of your semi-annual lectures on poverty.

Fred. No, madam — you are going to hear my ultimatum; for I have made up my mind to put a stop to the unhappiness you cause me, by a divorce, if necessary.

Mrs. Del. That don't worry me, Frederick, my dear: I've heard you threaten before to-day.

Fred. And now you are about to see the realization of my threats.

Mrs. Del. Come, come, sir, let us understand each other. If you wish a separation, I'm ready. Draw up the papers, give me this house, the children, and an income of three thousand dollars per annum, and you may start for New York, Halifax, or Hamilton, just as soon as you please.

Fred. Thank you, madam, thank you; but I decline your offer in

toto. As little as I care for the mother of my offspring, I shall never leave these precious children,

Enter MARGARET and two small children, door R. H. 1 E., very dirtily dressed, hair over their eyes, bits of bread in their hands. Stand R. H.

dirty and neglected as they are, to the guidance of such a woman. I ask you, Mrs. Delmaine, to look at them. I ask you, as a believer in the great truth that cleanliness is next unto godliness, if that couple aren't enough to make you blush.

Mrs. Del. Margaret, I've told you time and time again to keep those children looking neater. I've told you not to spare the scrubbing brush, if they did cry.

Mar. (R. H.) I know it, marm, but I haven't time to attend to them. If there were forty-eight hours in the day, I couldn't get through all my work. I cleans 'em up as well as I can, but while I'se cleaning one t'other gets dirty, and 'tain't no use trying.

Fred. You can go along, Margaret — it is not your fault. (*Exeunt MARGARET and children, D. R. 1 E.*) No, Mrs. Delmaine, don't try to throw the blame upon Margaret. You are the person to blame — you are the one who should set a better example in your own household, and the servants will soon follow it. But the coffee is cold now — just pour me out a cup, for I am an hour late at the counting room.

Mrs. Del. Any thing to stop your mouth. (*They sit at breakfast table on L. H.*) The Lord knows what a life I lead. It is scold before breakfast — scold at breakfast — scold when you come home to dinner — scold after dinner — and scold when you go to bed! It's a wonder to me that my temper ain't soured before this.

Fred. (L. H. of table.) By Heavens, madam, it's a wonder to me that I've got patience enough left to remonstrate with you! You lead me a dog's life!

Mrs. Del. (R. H. of table.) I lead you a dog's life! That's a pretty accusation — I scarcely see you. Your desertion of me is the town talk. If you were fond of parties, and concerts, and balls, and the theatre, we should live as happy as the day is long.

Fred. And you might add, the night, too. I like them all in moderation; but you never tire, month in and month out. You must be in the midst of a whirlpool of excitement, or you are troubled with the blues, or the (*emphatic*) highfantods, or some other infernal complaint, which no medicine, homœopathic or allopathic, can cure.

Mrs. Del. Sir, you grow extravagant in your assertions.

Fred. The truth, madam, in your case is extravagant enough, without resorting to any fancy sketches.

Mrs. Del. You are losing your temper, sir; you'll be profane in a moment.

Fred. Dam'me, madam, if you wouldn't make an archangel swear — you'd exhaust the patience of a second Job, and puzzle a Dabot to solve you.

Mrs. Del. (*Softening.*) I know you think so — I know you never loved me — I was a fool to marry a man who was so penurious.

(*Commences sobbing. Rises.*) But you'll break my heart one of these days — you will — you'll be a widower before you think of it. (*Advances, crying, towards R. H.*) Yes, sir, I know you'll not shed a tear. You ought to have a slave for a wife — but strychnine can accomplish a relief. I'll leave you, sir, and when you have left, I'll finish my meal. (*Exit, D. R. H. 1 E.*)

Fred. (*Who has sat very quietly looking at her, rises.*) That's all humbug. She is acting all that. It used to affect me once, but tears run off from my marble heart, now, like rain from a slated roof. They used to soften me once, but she's tried them on so often that I'm kind of petrified. She's a good soul, though, and possibly I am a little to blame. If I could only contrive some way to give her a lesson, I think I could reform her. While I've been hard to work trying to realize a fortune, she has been making progress in fashionable life — pah — fashionable fooleries. My junior partner told me the other day that there was a flirtation going on between her and young Mr. Flounce. At the club, last night, some one asked me about little Flounce, and appeared to think it a joke; and yesterday I received an anonymous note, which said, "BEWARE OF FLOUNCE." But she is a woman of too much sense, of too much purity, to be led away by such a manikin. I'll not trouble myself about him, at any rate. I'll look over the morning paper, and run down town. This little matrimonial junket has quite taken away my appetite. (*Sits down in the chair R. of table L. H. which Mrs. Delmaine has vacated, hanging on the side of which is her reticule. Takes up paper and looks over it leisurely.*) There isn't any thing very astonishingly new this morning. The editors have kind of exhausted bleeding Hungary and bleeding Kansas. (*Reads.*) "Copper stocks are rather down." — Don't like that, for I've been let in for a few hundreds in a mine, the location of which hadn't been ascertained at last accounts. (*Reads.*) "Potash is firm, and beef has a downward tendency." Here's a proposition to erect an equestrian statue of Washington on Boston Common — it ought to be done. "Triumphant success of Mrs. Barrow and Mrs. Wood in New York." — Glad to hear it. They went from our rural theatre, which hasn't its equal, I think I may say, even in the Empire City. — "A new play, written by a Boston boy, entitled 'My Wife's Mirror.'" Let me see. (*Reads.*) "The play is rather taking, and the idea is good. The wife, by adopting the follies of her husband, shows to him his own vices, with which he becomes disgusted." (*Taps his head.*) A thought strikes me — "'tis engendered here," as they say on the stage. (*Rises.*) "My Wife's Mirror!" And why not "My Husband's Mirror"? I'll manufacture one at once, frame it, hang it up. I'll run down town, and get my partner, Ricker, to assist me. I'll stop in at my tailor's, and buy the most fashionable ready-made garments that I can find. (*Sits down in same chair.*) Let me think — to correct her husband's vices she adopted them. I'll counterfeit the male counterparts of my wife's feminine delinquencies. I'll be the glass of fashion. (*Puts his hand on reticule.*) What's this? I feel paper inside this reticule. (*Opens it.*) A letter, and addressed to Mrs. Delmaine — "BEWARE OF FLOUNCE" — I'll read it. (*Reads.*) "Dearest: Your sweet look yesternight was sweet solace to my distracted

soul. I have asked myself a thousand times why I did not cross your path before——” Some one is coming! (*Thrusts the letter and bag under him, and keeps his seat.*)

Enter MARGARET, door R. H. 1 E., and mopes slowly around the stage, but does not say a word. FRED twists round, and as MARGARET is about making her exit, R. H., speaks to her.

Fred. Are you looking for any thing?

Mar. (*Going out, R. H.*) Only wanted to see if you were gone—that's all. (*Exit, door R. H. 1 E.*)

Fred. (*Taking out letter.*) I don't believe it; but the letter—“BEWARE OF FLOUNCER!” “Why I did not cross your path before he whose name you bear seized the priceless gem, the value of which he knows not. Let me bask in the sunshine of your smiles; let me alleviate the hard lot which you endure, and, by mingling our souls in sweet communion, find that affinity which is happiness here below. Name the hour when I can call, and believe me eternally your devoted friend.” No signature. “BEWARE OF FLOUNCER!” Ah! those horrid words are ringing in my ears. I feel that the green-eyed monster is hovering around me. (*Feeling in reticule.*) Ah! here is another note, and in my wife's handwriting. “BEWARE OF FLOUNCER” is written in glowing letters before my eyes. (*Reads.*) “Dearest: Your kind note reached me safely; but I know not what reply to make. I seek—I feel I need an affinity like you—one who can lift the veil of mist which shrouds that world of spiritual love which I pine for. I believe your friendship for me partakes of that nature; for however much I may be neglected by my husband, his honor is a priceless gem, which I would rather die than see tarnished, even by suspicion. At two o'clock to-day you may come—till then, adieu.” “BEWARE OF FLOUNCER!” (*Rushes round the stage in a terrible passion.*) I'll not hold the mirror up to nature. I'll hold a revolver, which will let daylight through the head of this affinity. I'll lift the veil of mist from this world of spiritual love with a vengeance. (*Looks at the letter.*) “My husband's honor”—ah! there is a spark of honor left, at least; and, after all, rashness may only kill what a little stratagem may cure. But some one comes. I'll put the letters back, and watch my chances. (*Hangs reticule in same place.*) Ah! it's Lizzie.

Enter MRS. DELMAINE, door R. H. 1 E.

Mrs. Del. Not gone yet, sir?

Fred. (*Aside.*) I'll commence the mirror now. I'll put on the first coating of quicksilver. (*To MRS. DEL.*) No, dearest, no. I couldn't bear to leave you in a pet, and I was just coming to ask your forgiveness for talking as I did.

Mrs. Del. (*Aside.*) He's been drinking.

Fred. You know I love you, you little pussy. You know you've got an eye like a daisy, with a soul in it, as the poet says.

Mrs. Del. (*Aside.*) He's wandering.

Fred. You know you always control me. You always make me do just what you please, you little pink.

Mrs. Del. (Aside.) He's insane.

Fred. I was very rough this morning, I know it, but my railroad didn't declare any dividend this January, and I was a little down in the mouth. I wanted to buy the diamond necklace that I saw at Jones's for you, but our road didn't pay, and I felt I couldn't afford it.

Mrs. Del. But that is no reason for scolding me — was it?

Fred. No, my love, no — but I have taken new resolutions. I'm an altered man. I have been a wretch, but am so no longer. Hereafter I'll live for you. Business may go to the devil. I've got some little land up, and so let's be gay. But —

“Should you ask me whence these feelings,
Whence these emotions and sensations —
I should answer ——”

O, hang Hiawatha — but whenever I feel happy, I always feel trochaic —. But, love, I tell you, I'm going to be the devoted slave of the dearest little gilliflower of a wife that man was ever blessed with. *(Holds her in his arms.)*

Mrs. Del. (Looking up lovingly.) But, Freddy dear, I wouldn't neglect my business if I were you. I'd attend to that, for without money one can't live very well.

Fred. My dear, I've worked hard enough, and I've got a soul above trade. I have other aspirations. But, wife, here's your reticule.

Mrs. Del. Ah, so it is — let it hang there. — *(Aside.)* It is all right — he hasn't opened it. But that stupid Margaret not to see it!

Fred. You'd better take it; the children might get it.

Mrs. Del. Perhaps I had. *(Takes it from him.)* It wouldn't be much of a loss if they did get it.

Fred. What's that bit of white paper, sticking out of it?

Mrs. Del. It's only a little bill, which is paid. Don't be too inquisitive.

Fred. Well, I won't, love. It's one of my old faults, I know. I must go down to the office for a few hours, but I'll be back at two o'clock, sure.

Mrs. Del. Say four, my dearest — for I have an engagement with Mrs. Parker about that hour.

Fred. Four be it — and now, love, give me a kiss. *(Kisses her.)* Do you know that carried me back six years, to that evening when I —

Mrs. Del. I don't recollect any evening.

Fred. You do, you witch — you know you do — that evening when I looked up at the moon —

Mrs. Del. Now do go along.

Fred. You blush — well, I won't. Good by till four o'clock.

(Exit, C. D. L. H.)

Mrs. Del. (Solus.) That man is certainly bedeviled. Such a change in so short a time — what can it mean? Perhaps this is but a symptom of that moral insanity which has just been discovered in

New York. Possibly he is socially insane. I wish I had asked him for fifty dollars — that would have tested him. He intends to neglect business, does he? I should like to see him do it. Who would pay Chandler's bill, or Jones's bill, or Moseley's bill? He is, after all, only my *material* husband; I seek my affinities among congenial spirits. There is Flouncee — poor fellow, he is spiritually in love with me, and I couldn't help giving him an interview. He talks so sweetly too — I must send him this note. (*Takes an envelope from table on R. H. and encloses letter in it — addresses it and rings bell.*)

Enter MARGARET, door 1 E. R. H.

Mar. I thought I heard the bell ring, marm.

Mrs. Del. Yes, Margaret, just take this letter and leave it at Dr. White's. It's for the expressman who brings in flowers from Milton. You needn't say any thing, but leave it — that's all.

Mar. (*Turning to go — looks at outside of letter.*) That's the first time I knew that Edwin Flouncee was an expressman. But we girls live and learn. (*To Mrs. DELMAINE.*) Will you take care of the children?

Mrs. Del. No, no, I haven't the time. I am obliged to run down to Mrs. Parker's. Leave them in the kitchen with the cook. Bless their dear souls! And, Margaret, be sure you don't stop by the way. There is nothing which gives me more trouble than to have girls waste time by looking in at store windows.

Mar. Yes, marm — any thing else?

Mrs. Del. Yes, bring my hat and shawl.

Mar. Yes, marm.

(*Exit door R. H. 1 E.*)

Mrs. Del. Upon my word I forgot all about my breakfast — but the late supper at Mrs. Powers's took away my appetite. That frozen champagne was delicious — though I must confess it gave me a headache. Poor Frederick had been in bed five hours when I got home, for what with the iced champagne, the Roman punch, and old Madeira, I felt very singularly. Come, hurry, Margaret.

Enter MARGARET, door R. 1 E., with six bonnets.

Mar. I didn't know which hat you wanted, and so I brought the first half dozen I saw.

Mrs. Del. O, stupid! I want my eleven o'clock hat — ah, this is it — run out of the back door, Margaret, with that note, and be back as quick as you can. (*Exit MARGARET, door R. 1 E.* *Mrs. DELMAINE exits C. D. R. H. almost immediately.*)

Enter FREDERICK DELMAINE, C. D. L. H.

Fred. As good luck would have it, I met my partner at the door, and we dropped into the grocery store opposite and talked my scheme over. He approves it, and has entered heart and soul into it. He has gone to procure me every thing needful, and has promised to aid and abet in this plan to reform a wife by the apparent ruination of

her husband. And we have laid a trap for Flouncer. I don't exactly like those letters. I think I'll shoot Flouncer slightly. I just saw Mrs. Delmaine flaunt down the street like the wife of a millionaire. She did look pretty, and I'd like to see the man who don't feel kind of happy when he sees a fine woman walking along, well dressed, and can say to himself, "That's my wife." But I must, shall, and will put a stop to the rig she is running. But I must have a spiritual affinity, imaginary or real, and I believe the first are the safest. I'll write a letter to my dream love, and take good care that Mrs. Delmaine shall see it. (*Sits himself at table, R. H., and writes, reading as he progresses.*) "Dearest: Your last gentle token of spiritual love is embalmed in my heart of hearts, and you yourself shall keep the key." I think that is sufficiently transcendental to suit any one. "Your breathing words, 'uttered not, yet comprehended,' were like the lava of Vesuvius upon the arid plains of my warm heart." If Mrs. Delmaine can make sense out of that, she is a better scholar now than she was when I married her out of a farm house. "I know that every pulsation of our congenial spirits are in unison, and that the throbbings of our warm hearts vibrate like — vibrate like —" I'd a great mind to put, the harp of a thousand strings, but that isn't exactly spiritual. I have it. "Vibrate like the aspen leaves when wooed by the soft breezes of the south wind. I'll meet you again soon, but till then believe me your true affinity." I'll try that at a venture. (*Door bell rings, L. H.*) Ah, there's my clothes, I guess. (*Walks to door 2 E. L. H.*) John, if that is a bundle for me, carry it to my room; and now I'll drop this letter here, put on my new clothes, and see what's to be done. (*Exit door L. 2 H.*)

Enter MRS. DELMAINE, C. D. R. H.

Mrs. Del. O Heavens! such news, such sensations! Mr. and Mrs. Crosby are going to separate on account of supposed moral delinquency on his part — the gossips are full of it. Mrs. Blake has bought the one thousand dollar camel's hair shawl at Warren's. Mrs. Simpson has procured a brocade from New York which will stand alone. Mrs. Parkman has received, direct from Paris, a crinoline skirt which measures sixteen feet in circumference, and will wear it at Mrs. Popham's reception on Thursday evening. Mrs. Johnson —. (*Sees letter.*) What's this? Has Flouncer been imprudent? (*Picks letter up.*) No direction. (*Opens it.*) No signature — but I'll swear it's Frederick's handwriting. (*Reads letter.*) What — what — what is all this? I must be dreaming. Such glowing words, such soul-fraught language! Have I been deceived? Does not this account for his indifference in times past, and for this sudden change? Some old love I presume. (*Tragic.*) "O that I should live to be the leavings of a man!" (*Tenderly.*) It will break my heart, I know it will. Frederick, who made a pet of me, to be weaned from my side! (*Fiercely.*) I'll have the heart's blood of this fiend in female shape. I'll teach her how to invade the sanctity of my household, to steal away the honor plighted at the altar. (*Looks at her watch.*) It's two o'clock, I declare, and Flouncer will be here. I told Margaret to let him in. Ah, I hear him coming up.

Enter MR. FLOUNCER, C. D. R. H.

Floun. Ah, my dear Mrs. Delmaine, I just left our circle — they were all curious to know where I was going. Some predicted that I was going here, others there, but not one thought of you. While they were discussing it I stole away, like the Arabs who fold their tents.

Mrs. Del. You have a splendid memory, Mr. Flouncer. Your quotations from the poets are singularly correct.

Floun. Madam, you flatter me. There is a congeniality between myself and the unseen spirits of departed poets. When I am at a loss for a quotation, I merely press the lump of memory, No. 26, and I am impressed at once. My dear Mrs. Delmaine, this gift, great as it is, I value as nothing when compared with the pride I feel in being regarded as your affinity.

Mrs. Del. I don't exactly understand what you mean by affinity. If I confess that you are mine, what rights are exercised by you?

Floun. Well, madam, you have not progressed far enough in the study of spiritual love to understand. It is my belief that Mr. Delmaine is somebody else's husband.

Mrs. Del. What's that you say? (*Agitated.*) Do you know where she lives — can you show me the house only?

Floun. Madam, be calm — I mean that spiritually you were not intended for each other. There is a dissimilarity in your tastes — you are ethereal, he is terrestrial. We — (*takes her hand*) — we are of the same mould — let me imprint one —

Enter MARGARET hastily, C. D. R. H.

Mar. O madam, Mr. Ricker, your husband's partner, is on the stairs, and is coming up.

Mrs. Del. I am lost, lost, lost! Mr. Delmaine will hear of it, and you'll be killed. But stay — go in here, (*points towards her husband's room, 2 E. L. H.,*) and remain concealed till I call you.

Mar. He can't, madam; John says master has been in his room some time.

Mrs. Del. Mr. Flouncer, you are no better than a corpse.

Floun. Don't say so — do take and put me somewhere, I beg of you. My constitution is spiritually feeble, and I cannot cope with two men. Do, miss, take me away.

Mar. Get in here, into this closet, and don't breathe or move. (*He is hustled in door R. E., and the door is closed.* *MRS. DELMAINE seizes a book and seats herself at table R. H. MARGARET clears the table L. H., and carries the things off R. H.; trembling with fright she drops a few plates, and exits door R. H. 1 E., as MR. RICKER enters at C. D. L. H.*)

Rick. A careless servant you have there, Mrs. Delmaine. But it's good for the trade. I don't suppose the Sumners would object to having one such girl in every household.

Mrs. Del. She is careless, but very faithful. She is so kind to the children, and takes such good care of them, that I hate to part with her, and therefore I pardon her clumsiness.

Rick. Is your husband ill to-day? He has not been at the store. It is something so unusual that I called round to learn the cause of his absence.

Mrs. Del. O, no; he was quite well this morning. He went out, but during my absence he returned, and is now in his chamber. Shall I call him?

Rick. Not yet, if you please. Have you noticed, my dear Mrs. Delmaine, any thing peculiar in his actions of late?

Mrs. Del. O, no — yes — I mean nothing but a slight eccentricity.

Rick. Is there no cause of trouble at home? Excuse my asking, but his neglect of business and his constant talk about affinities led me to suspect that there might be a cause for it at home.

Mrs. Del. I have not given him any cause, that I know of.

Rick. Possibly there may be another who has. What time does he come home of nights?

Mrs. Del. I confess I do not know. — (*Aside.*) I more than suspect — this note and this conduct — he has fallen a prey to some bad woman. — (*Aloud.*) Ah, Mr. Ricker, let me confide in you — let me — (*Noise is heard in FREDERICK'S room L. H. 2 E. He enters dressed in the most extravagant style.*)

Mrs. Del. My Heavens! Frederick, what are you dressed up in that style for? Are you insane?

Fred. (*Taking stage ad lib.*) Ah, Ricker, I am happy to see you. My wife asks me if I am insane — do you think I am? Madam, is it any proof of a feeble intellect when you put on your three hundred dollar ball dress? Ricker, do you think I am slightly loony?

Rick. Upon my word, you are rather peculiar — but I don't see any signs of lunacy.

Fred. I am glad to hear you say so — for I've come to the conclusion that I wasn't born to hide my candle under a bushel any longer. You may attend to the business, or the business may go to the devil.

Rick. You surprise me, Mr. Delmaine.

Fred. By the gods, sir, you'll not be the only one who'll be surprised. I'm bound to shine in the political world. I'm going to offer myself as candidate for the Common Council from our ward. I've got three axes to grind.

Mrs. Del. (*To RICKER.*) Do you hear that? He's certainly insane.

Fred. Mrs. Delmaine, I'm going to settle the jail land question in a manner which will suit all parties. That is axe No. 1. I'm going to relieve Washington Street of all the omnibuses, and Tremont Street of the railway, by opening a new avenue where you little expect it. That is axe No. 2. I'm going to have a public wash-house established on Back Bay, where all the public officers can have their linen washed and their shirt buttons sewed on — free gratis for nothing. That is axe No. 3.

Mrs. Del. Do, Mr. Ricker, run down to the station house, and ask some men to come up and take him to the hospital. He will do something rash.

Fred. These three ideas will make me famous; and next year I

shall be sent to Congress. In anticipation of going there, I intend to perfect myself as a good shot, (*takes out pistol*;) for they don't trouble good marksmen down there. By way of trial, I'll show you what I can do now. (*Goes towards closet, R. F., where FLOUNCER is concealed, and draws a circle, with a large dot in the middle, on the door, and commences measuring the distance by paces.*)

Mrs. Del. Great Heavens! Flouncer will be killed. I beseech you, Mr. Ricker, take that pistol away from him. Frederick, I implore you, don't fire. Don't neglect the appeal of your wife.

Fred. Madam, you neglect my appeals; you neglect your household duties, and neglect your children. Why should I listen to you?

Mrs. Del. But, Frederick, you are going to do a foolish thing.

Fred. Madam, you do a hundred foolish things.

Mrs. Del. I implore you, then, as you value your hopes of heaven, and my peace of mind —

Fred. Madam, I begin to suspect. Is any one concealed in that closet?

Mrs. Del. (*Proudly.*) Sir, you insult, by such a suspicion, the mother of your children.

Fred. So I do. I didn't think of that before. As there is no one in there, it can't do any harm to fire at the door. No matter if the ball does penetrate; it will only damage a few old hats and coats.

Mrs. Del. If you present that pistol at that door again, I'll expose you, sir, to Mr. Ricker. (*Showing letter.*)

Fred. You found the letter I lost, then. Well, I care not — I will have my affinities.

Mrs. Del. O that I should live to hear you speak thus! Have I lost all hold upon your affections?

Fred. No, madam, you are slowly regaining them; but I tell you that I am bound to rise in the world. You shall yet be a shining star at Washington. But I must be a good shot before I start; and, Ricker, here goes — ten to one that I hit the centre the first shot.

Rick. Done! (*FRED fires, and FLOUNCER, rolled up in old coats, tumbles out, door R. F., and while FRED and RICKER are attending to MRS. DELMAINE, who faints into RICKER'S arms, MARGARET rushes in, door 1 E. R. H., and rolls FLOUNCER off, C. D. R. H.; they place MRS. DELMAINE on a sofa, L. C.; MARGARET returns, and goes off, 1 E. R. H.*)

Rick. Great Heavens! Mr. Delmaine, I am afraid we have carried this joke too far.

Fred. She's coming to — now sit down. Margaret, send the children. (*MARGARET enters with children, door R. H. 1 E.; the children are neatly dressed, with white aprons; DELMAINE takes them on his knees, as he sits in a chair, R. C.; MRS. DELMAINE slowly recovers.*)

Mrs. Del. This is some horrid dream. I thought there was blood here. (*Takes hold of her dress.*) I thought there was murder on his hands. Frederick, where am I? — It's but a dream. — Is Flouncer dead? (*MRS. DELMAINE, on sofa, L. H. C., looks up, and sees her husband and children, R. H. C.; uttering an exclamation of delight, she rushes towards them, and leans her head on FRED'S shoulder.*)

Mrs. Del. Have I been in the land of spirits?

Fred. Yes, my dear, in the land of wicked spirits; but at the

smell of gunpowder they disappeared. It is a powerful disinfecting agent.

Mrs. Del. And is no one killed?

Rick. No one, madam. A man tumbled out of that closet.

Fred. Yes, love, and Margaret rolled him out.

Mrs. Del. And will you — can you forgive me?

Fred. Yes, my dear, if you will give me assurance that the mirror I have held up has been sufficiently powerful for you to see the reflection of your foibles. I will not call them vices; for your head, not your heart, led you astray.

Mrs. Del. I see it now — I see the motive. This extravagance in dress is but a reflection of my own — your assumed neglect of business the counterpart of my delinquency as a good housewife. Your pretended political aspirations but a burlesque of my love of follies, which are as transient as political honors — but, husband, this letter?

Fred. Only a little invention of my own. — My affinities are here. (*Embracing his wife and children.*)

Rick. Have you no others? Are these good people not of your circle? (*Pointing to audience.*)

Fred. Certainly; and, ere the curtain falls, let me express the trust that this trifle has its moral. If there are any here who have seen a reflection of those follies acted on the great stage of life, may I hope that a little good has been accomplished by the exhibition of —

Mrs. Del. (*Promptly.*) “MY HUSBAND'S MIRROR!”

SITUATIONS.

MARGARET. MR. DELMAINE. MRS. DELMAINE. MR. RICKER.
TWO CHILDREN.
Curtain.
R. H. L. H.



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